AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-9.   (Cancelled)

10.   (Currently Amended) A process for the production of a plasticiser ester comprising:

    (i)   esterifying an acid or an anhydride with an alcohol containing from 6 to 13 carbon atoms to form a crude ester; then

    (ii)   treating the crude ester with a base to form a treated ester; then without a stripping step to remove excess alcohol prior to step (iii),

    (iii)   filtering the treated ester to separate a liquid product; then

    (iv)   stripping the liquid product to form a stripped material; then

    (v)   treating the stripped material with activated carbon an adsorbent; and then

    (vi)   filtering the product of step (v), optionally in the presence of a filter aid, to remove the adsorbent from the plasticiser ester.

11.   (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the base is an alkali metal salt.

12.   (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide and sodium carbonate.

13 - 14.   (Cancelled)

15.   (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the acid or anhydride is selected from the group consisting of aromatic monocarboxylic acids and anhydrides, and polybasic aromatic carboxylic acids and anhydrides.

16.   (Original)   The process according to claim 10 wherein the anhydride is phthalic anhydride.

17.   (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the alcohol is a C_9 to C_{11} alcohol.

18. (Original) The process according to claim 17 wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of a C_{10} alcohol and a C_{11} alcohol.

19. (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the combined amount of adsorbent and the filter aid employed is from about 0.01 to about 5 wt%, based on the weight of the plasticiser ester.

20. (Currently Amended) The process according to claims 10 wherein steps (v) and (vi) are enabled by employing a mixture of filter aid and <u>activated carbon</u> ~~adsorbent~~ in step (v).

21. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 20 wherein the mixture contains from about 90 to about 30 parts by weight of the filter aid and from about 10 to about 70 parts by weight of the <u>activated carbon</u> ~~adsorbent~~.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the filter aid is a clay.

24. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 10 wherein the filter aid is present and is a clay~~, and the adsorbent is activated carbon~~.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the treatment step (v) is performed at a temperature in the range of about 20 to about 180°C.

27. (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the treatment step (v) is performed at a temperature in the range of about 80 to about 120°C.

28.   (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the treatment step (v) is performed at a temperature in the range of about 80 to about 120°C and in which the plasticizer ester is a C_8 to C_{13} dialkyl phthalate.

29.   (Original) The process according to claim 10 wherein the plasticizer ester comprises a dialkyl phthalate characterised by a carbonyl number below 0.2 mg KOH/g, a light ends content of less than 1000 ppm wt, and a liquid volume resistivity (LVR) (in units of 10^{12} ohm.cm) that is:

   i)   greater than about 0.3 in the case where di-alkyl is di-2-ethyl hexyl;

   ii)   greater than about 0.6 in the case where di-alkyl is di-isononyl; and

   iii) greater than about 1.35 in the case where di-alkyl is di-isodecyl.

30-39. (Cancelled)